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#### YOUTH COUNCIL APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

Applications are currently being accepted for the Catawba County Youth Council. The Council began meeting in January 2008 to provide a youth voice and perspective to local government. The council consists of 25 high school students with representatives from each school and selected community organizations.

The Youth Council meets monthly at the Agricultural Resources Center in Newton. Students are appointed to the Council by the Catawba County Commissioners. Students are appointed for a one-year term but may be reappointed for consecutive years.

According to Donna Mull, Catawba County 4-H Agent and Youth Council Advisor, "a growing number of city and county governments are organizing youth councils

as a way to educate and hear from teen leaders about local issues. Often governing boards, make decisions that impact youth but never hear the opinion of the youth effected". Youth Councils provide an avenue for students to improve their leadership skills and learn more about and become involved with local issues and civic affairs. During the past year, the council focused on teen driving, teen pregnancy, and youth literacy. The students became more educated about the issues through programs and tours during their monthly meetings and they also worked in committees to develop outreach programs to address each area. The Council also hosted a Youth Issues Forum and will use issues identified to help determine their plans for the 2010-11 school year.



**Youth Council members met with staff at Family Care Center and assisted with afternoon tutoring for students. Youth Council members pictured are (left to right): Whitney Patterson, Noah Roberts, Kim Hulley, Sarah Sigmon, and Youseff Amrani.**

During 2010, the Catawba County Youth Council partnered with the Hickory City Youth Council to focus on the issues of homelessness. As part of the project, they visited some agencies that serve the homeless, prepared and served two meals to homeless clients, and volunteered one afternoon assisting with tutoring at the Family Care Center.

Youth Council applications may be obtained from high school guidance counselors. Interested students may also contact the NC Cooperative Extension Center at 465-8240 or e-mail [donna\\_mull@ncsu.edu](mailto:donna_mull@ncsu.edu). Completed applications are due by September 30.